United Nations PBC/BUR/2006/SR.3

Peacebuilding Commission

Distr.: General
23 January 2007

Original: English

Peacebuilding Commission
Burundi configuration

Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 December 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Løvald ..... (Norway)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

Peacebuilding in Burundi (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

07-21165 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

1. **The Chairperson** said that, in accordance with the decision taken at the 1st meeting of the Burundi configuration on 13 October 2006 and with the Commission's practice at previous meetings, and if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission wished to hold the meeting as an open one.

2. *It was so decided.*

Peacebuilding in Burundi (*continued*)
(PBC/2/BUR/CRP.2)

Identifying the gaps

3. **The Chairperson** said that his recent visit to Burundi had underlined the importance of direct contacts with the Government and other stakeholders at the country level and he was encouraged by the Government's eagerness to work with the Peacebuilding Commission and the international community to consolidate peace, build its capacity and ensure economic recovery. He commended Burundi on the progress it had made and the steps it had taken to secure peace and stability, while stressing the need for budgetary support for those efforts in order to enable the Government to meet its commitments. During his visit, he had met with the Norwegian Minister of International Development, who had pledged the full support of his Government for peace and development in Burundi and announced that Norway would establish an embassy in Bujumbura with a view to facilitating bilateral cooperation.

4. He said that the Commission would hear a statement from Mr. Kamana, the Minister of Good Governance and General Inspection of the State and Local Administration of Burundi.

5. **Mr. Kamana** (Burundi) said that his Government had identified good governance, security, the strengthening of justice, promotion of human rights, land ownership and budgetary support as key peacebuilding priorities, and had established a steering committee to translate those priorities into specific projects. The steering committee was focusing on dialogue with its national and international partners, including the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), civil society and Parliament. In order to build public confidence in State institutions, it was crucial to implement the Ceasefire Agreement effectively, bring about rapid improvements in the human rights situation and strengthen the rule of law. An effective response to those challenges and to the concerns of the public called for the rapid mobilization of resources by the Government with the support of its partners.

6. A culture of dialogue between citizens and institutions, supported by measures to combat corruption, was key to promoting good governance and ensuring lasting peace. With those goals in mind, the Government had enacted a law to prevent and suppress corruption and related offences, and the Parliament had approved draft legislation relating to the establishment of a special anti-corruption unit and a special court to try corruption cases. The Government was engaged in ongoing dialogue with its national partners, particularly the media and political parties, on ways to combat corruption; related conferences and seminars were held regularly. Notwithstanding those positive developments, quick-impact measures were needed to address persisting problems in order to ensure that the expectations of the population did not turn into frustration, which could give rise to renewed conflict.

7. The Government recognized the need for external assistance in facing the many challenges posed by the reform and strengthening of the security sector, the rationalization and professionalization of the National Defence Force and the Burundi National Police and efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms. The proposed interventions to strengthen justice and the rule of law, including the financing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the rehabilitation of the judicial system, should ideally begin in January 2007. They would undoubtedly have an immediate impact by reducing impunity, promoting respect for human rights and laying the foundations for the success of the Government's planned reconstruction and development programmes.

8. Growing demographic pressure resulting from large-scale refugee returns, primarily from neighbouring countries, together with a shortage of land, could pose a threat to peace and stability in Burundi if land ownership and related issues were not addressed or regulated adequately. To prevent land disputes, the recently established National Commission on Land and Property required financial resources in order to enable displaced persons to reclaim their land

or to resettle. The Commission, in collaboration with all partners, could initiate the necessary interventions in order to relieve pressure on rural land.

9. Concerning budgetary support, one of the main consequences of the severe budget deficit was the sporadic payment of salaries of civil servants and Burundi National Defence Force and Burundi National Police personnel. If that situation persisted, the resulting social tension could degenerate rapidly into a crisis. While the Government was negotiating with its partners to secure budgetary support in order to make up the deficit, the Commission should contribute funds as soon as possible in order to accelerate that process.

10. He appealed to the Commission to help his Government ensure that the democratic process was irreversible. In that regard, he expressed appreciation for the contributions that the Commission had already made to that process, and extended his thanks to the Norwegian Government for its efforts to identify ways to support Burundi. The Government encouraged members of the Commission to emulate Norway's example and visit Burundi.

11. He suggested that a joint Government-United Nations steering committee should be established as the main coordination body at the political and decision-making level responsible for the preparation, approval, implementation and follow-up of the interventions envisaged. The steering committee would foster dialogue among the administrative authorities, ONUB and other multilateral institutions and bilateral partners, and would work in close collaboration with the National Committee on Aid Coordination to ensure the coherence of interventions envisaged under the Peacebuilding Fund, the long-term programmes set out under the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction and all other programmes currently financed by the international community. A technical secretariat comprising Government and United Nations experts would be responsible for providing technical support to the committee in monitoring the implementation and assessment of priority plans. The implementation of priority measures would be monitored regularly through periodic meetings of the steering committee. There would also be regular progress evaluations, which would be used as the basis for any necessary adjustments.

12. Since Burundi's peace consolidation needs were too great to be financed through the Peacebuilding Fund alone, he called upon the Commission to mobilize donors and funds to finance programmes under the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction. In that connection, he informed the Commission that a conference of partners under the strategic framework for economic growth and poverty reduction was planned for March 2007.

13. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi), updating the Commission on recent developments in Burundi, said that, regrettably, there had been no progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement signed in September 2006 between the Government and the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu — Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL). The FNL leadership had refused to return to Burundi or participate in the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism before certain conditions were met by the Government, including the release of FNL prisoners. The South African Facilitation had continued its efforts to help the Government resolve those outstanding differences. Meanwhile, the African Union had authorized the establishment of the Special Task Force provided for under the Ceasefire Agreement; that Force would also support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. While ONUB would be unable to fulfil the tasks envisaged for it under the Agreement before its military contingents were repatriated at the end of December 2006, its South African battalion would become part of the African Union Task Force as of 1 January 2007.

14. The Burundian Government had continued its efforts to promote political dialogue with all stakeholders and had also taken several key steps towards stabilizing the economy and creating the necessary conditions for greater cooperation with the international financial institutions.

15. While the recent adoption of a law against corruption and the ongoing review of the Criminal Code, aimed at bringing it into line with international norms, were encouraging, those positive developments had been overshadowed inter alia by the slow judicial process in the case of the seven individuals jailed in connection with the alleged coup plot, the arrest of several journalists in recent weeks and the brutal killing of a number of civilians in the province of Muyinga some months previously, especially the apparent impunity enjoyed by the alleged perpetrators.

National and international human rights observers and international partners had held several meetings with Government authorities at the highest level to express their great concern over those issues. The Government had reiterated its intolerance of human rights abuses, given assurances that due legal process would be observed in all cases, notwithstanding the weaknesses of the judicial system it had inherited, made the court proceedings in the case of the seven alleged coup plotters public, and allowed visits to the detained journalists. Hundreds of soldiers and other uniformed personnel had been severely sanctioned or summarily dismissed as the result of investigations into human rights abuses. The Government appealed to the international community to be patient in view of the lack of resources available to Burundi, the huge capacity deficits of governance structures, deep distrust among key national stakeholders and their followers and the ongoing consequences of conflict. In that regard, the Government reaffirmed its determination to include in the training programmes for security forces, human rights awareness, including the rights of women, girls and other vulnerable sectors of the population.

16. The humanitarian situation in Burundi continued to be of deep concern. Land disputes were being exacerbated by the increased rate of refugee returns, and recent drought, ongoing torrential rains and resulting mudslides had increased food shortages. The United Nations and other partners, in collaboration with the relevant national actors, were examining how the situation could be effectively addressed in order to reduce the possible negative impact on the Government's peace consolidation efforts.

17. The United Nations had worked closely with the Government to identify on the basis of the comprehensive mapping of the various initiatives currently under preparation or implementation by the Government and the international community, the areas of support deemed vital for the consolidation of peace in the short term. On the basis of the mapping exercise, the Government had submitted a peacebuilding priority plan to the Peacebuilding Fund, containing a number of concept notes with budgetary estimates aimed at addressing some of those gaps in the peace consolidation process.

18. While the Burundian Government was responsible for the implementation of the various critical peacebuilding tasks, it could not do so successfully without the support of the United Nations and the international community. The objectives and structure of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) were based on lessons learned through the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and on a common strategy for action and reflected the reform agenda of the United Nations.

19. BINUB support would be guided, inter alia, by the need to ensure that all United Nations actions were implemented within the national framework for peace consolidation, notably the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the United Nations Common Action Plan for Burundi, and the need to address the political, security-related, rule of law-related and socio-economic dimensions of conflict as a single agenda. Its support would also be oriented towards achieving immediate and visible impact within a two-year period. United Nations activities must facilitate the transfer of expertise and knowledge, thus contributing to capacity-building, and focus on areas where it could demonstrably add value in relation to other actors, thus avoiding fragmentation of United Nations engagement while deepening its scope. The United Nations should engage in peacebuilding activities only if it had readily available expertise that it could immediately deploy. It was also important to ensure the integration of major cross-cutting issues, such as HIV/AIDS and gender, and to address the special needs of vulnerable sectors of the population. With those aims in mind, BINUB had been reconfiguring and reorienting the strategic, programmatic and structural components of United Nations country assistance in Burundi.

20. It was crucial to move from plans to action and to secure ways and means to deliver immediate and visible assistance to the people of Burundi. The speedy disbursement of resources from the Peacebuilding Fund and the provision of budgetary support would be of great help in consolidating the advances of the peacebuilding process and reducing the risk of setbacks.

21. While the international community had an important contribution to make, national actors would play the determining role in the future of peacebuilding in Burundi. The political will and capacity of those actors to assume their responsibilities in creating a conducive environment for peace were critical.

22. Moreover, the Peacebuilding Commission must ensure that its terms of engagement with Burundi reflected the complexities and dynamics that characterized post-conflict situations, which would require a different approach to interaction with the Government and other national actors from that applied in peacemaking, peacekeeping or traditional development contexts. While the international community should not hesitate to bring issues of concern to the attention of local authorities, it should frame its advice and recommendations in a principled and constructive manner that reflected shared responsibility and accountability in making the transition from violence to peace irreversible.

23. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the country-specific meetings of the Commission would help chart a course that would reconcile the need for speedy progress with the patient and sustained partnership that the post-conflict situation called for.

24. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of the World Bank had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

25. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Sow (World Bank) took a place at the Committee table.*

26. **Mr. Sow** (World Bank), referring to the three thematic areas presented by the World Bank at the Commission's meeting on 13 October 2006, said that, following a request by the President of Burundi to the President of the World Bank, the World Bank Institute was assisting the Ministry of Good Governance and General Inspection of the State and Local Administration to carry out a governance diagnostic study in Burundi. The study, to be completed by the third quarter of 2007, involved surveys of a cross section of civil servants, private sector agents, Burundian households and non-governmental organizations. Its results would be used as inputs for the formulation of a comprehensive strategy on governance.

27. In the area of employment generation and infrastructure rehabilitation, the World Bank had disbursed an initial credit of $40 million for a public works and employment generation project. In early 2006, it had provided additional grant financing of $30 million in the context of its strategy for assistance to Burundi. By October 2006, 57 per cent of that grant had already been disbursed or fully committed and the remainder was expected to be disbursed by the end of 2007. In view of the weakness of Government institutions and the need for speedy implementation of activities, the management of contracts to implement activities under the project had been delegated to a semi-private agency, the Agence Burundaise pour la Réalisation des Travaux d'Intérêt Public (ABUTIP). Under the project, some 3.8 million person-days of employment for unskilled workers had been generated. The project activities had also resulted in improved access to municipal infrastructure, including the construction of roads, markets, slaughterhouses, primary schools, health centres, urban drainage systems, water supply systems and river flood protection facilities. The operational experience of ABUTIP was highly encouraging. The African Development Bank, for instance, was using that agency to implement a socio-economic reinsertion project. Several other programmes and activities were also in progress. The World Bank was therefore confident that, on the basis of that experience and the opportunities provided by the Peacebuilding Fund, Burundi could readily meet the challenge of speedy implementation of employment-generation activities.

28. Regarding sustained economic and social recovery, the recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission for the fifth Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) review had concluded discussions on the programme and would recommend completion of that review. That news augured well for the maintenance of a stable macroeconomic framework during 2007. However, adequate and timely budget support from the international community would be necessary to keep the PRGF on track. If salaries were not paid, or if prices rose drastically, the overall economic and political stability of the country would be at risk, thus delaying investment, employment generation and economic growth. The Bank therefore encouraged the Commission to rally donor support in that critical area.

29. The challenge remained for Burundi to accelerate the pace of structural reforms so as to enhance the bases for sustained economic growth. With assistance from the Bank and other donors, the Government had recently adopted a comprehensive plan to reform the coffee sector and similar plans would be developed for the tea, sugar and cotton sectors. A national workshop involving key stakeholders would be held in Burundi in late January 2007 to discuss the findings of the ongoing joint Government-World Bank analysis on the

sources of economic growth for Burundi and build consensus on priority actions. The results of that exercise would be brought to bear on the implementation of the related sections of the PRSP.

30. On the social front, the preparation of a Bank-funded national community development project was at an advanced stage and the Bank expected the grant to be approved by its Board by the summer of 2007. The project was a key instrument in contributing to the restoration of social capital and building the key elements of a decentralization policy. Preparation of a further Bank-funded education project, in particular to support the Government's goal of universal education, was also well advanced. The Bank's Board was expected to approve the related grant financing by the summer of 2007.

31. By the autumn of 2007, preparation of all of the Bank's planned assistance operations in Burundi for the period 2005-2007 would be completed. The Bank would therefore endeavour to prepare, during 2007, its next Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for the period 2008-2010. In that context, it looked forward to extensive consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders, including the Government, civil society members and other donors. The Country Assistance Strategy would build on the priorities set forth in the Government's PRSP. In addition, the Bank would take into account the results of the meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi in March 2007 with a view to promoting stronger donor coordination.

32. **Mr. Verbeke** (Belgium) recalled that, at the October meeting, four areas had been identified in which additional efforts were needed: improving governance, strengthening the rule of law, reforming the security sector and ensuring community development. The Commission had also stressed the importance of political dialogue between the Burundian authorities, political parties, civil society, the private sector and the media, and the need for donors to maintain or increase their support for Burundi and for coherence among international interventions. Belgium, for its part, had held its first bilateral meeting with Burundi since the establishment of a democratically elected Government and had undertaken to provide substantial aid to Burundi in the coming years. The Commission had also recommended that the Burundian Government should develop, with United Nations support, plans and strategies aimed at bridging critical gaps in the area of peacebuilding and requested that activities already under way should be identified. He hailed the considerable efforts made by the Government and the United Nations in that regard.

33. Turning to the mapping exercise, he welcomed the fact that the document mentioned the need to support actions to promote a culture of respect for democratic rules among the political parties and actions to combat corruption. As of yet, no support had been envisaged, however, for the National Commission on Land and Property, the preparation of a national plan for overall security sector reform or the creation of an independent national human rights commission, all of which were crucial. With respect to the need for a global strategy for justice sector reform, it should be noted that the Government had presented a sector-specific policy on justice for the period 2006-2010. Lastly, a number of gaps that had been identified — namely, promoting the private sector and boosting economic growth; protecting the environment; improving access to decent housing, and promoting controlled urban development; and reducing malnutrition — were rather general in nature and seemed to relate more to regular development programmes than to peacebuilding.

34. The recently submitted Peacebuilding Priority Plan, though valuable, had been drawn up before critical challenges had been refined and efforts under way identified. There was a risk, therefore, that priority challenges would not be met and that the central objective of the Commission would be missed. It would have been more logical first to identify the main risks, the main areas requiring international intervention and the areas already covered by existing funding mechanisms and donors, and then for the Peacebuilding Fund to intervene in areas not already covered. A greater distinction also needed to be made between the work of the Fund and the more strategic work of the Commission. The relationship between the Commission's work and other international meetings on Burundi should also be more clearly defined, for example by way of a strategic timetable of major meetings, such as the March 2007 round table in Burundi.

35. Events in Burundi since the previous meeting demonstrated that Burundi was still a young democracy that required the Commission's ongoing support. Challenges remained in the areas identified at the previous meeting. There was, in particular, the need for: further initiatives to promote dialogue and trust

among the various stakeholders and genuine political will on both sides; greater media regulation and self-regulation; speedier implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and PALIPEHUTU-FNL, a process which Belgium supported; and for the national disarmament programme to include the civilian population too. Moreover, judicial reform was an absolute priority and non-respect for the rule of law in certain cases was a matter of serious concern. Efforts were needed in such areas to help Burundi follow the courageous path of building peace.

36. **The Chairperson** asked the representative of Belgium to clarify his comments on the private sector, the environment, habitat and malnutrition. It was not clear whether he had been referring to Burundi's poverty reduction strategy paper or to the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission itself.

37. **Mr. Verbeke** (Belgium) said that he merely thought that those areas needed to be fleshed out more fully.

38. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that the mapping exercise did not mention the issue of budgetary support, even though it had been identified as a priority area at the previous meeting. He wished to know whether the recently submitted Peacebuilding Priority Plan contained any information in that regard and, if so, whether that information could be shared with the Commission. He also hoped that the issue would be reflected in the outcome of that day's two meetings.

39. **Mr. Sow** (World Bank) said that, with respect to 2006, the recent IMF mission to Burundi had confirmed that the budget financing gap had been pretty much closed. It was not, therefore, a major problem and the Government had been able to keep expenditure within remaining funds. The World Bank, meanwhile, had set aside budgetary support to the tune of $60 million, which would cover the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007. The first instalment of $35 million had been disbursed in November. The steps required for disbursement of the second instalment of $25 million should be completed by February.

40. It was his understanding that prospects for 2007 were difficult, with a budget gap of around $60 million. The World Bank was therefore gearing up to support the 2007 budget. Since IMF was responsible for looking at overall budget financing, the IMF representative, who was scheduled to speak in the afternoon, should be able to elaborate further.

41. **Mr. Kamana** (Burundi) said that the reasons underlying Burundi's request for budgetary support were set out on page 58 of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan.

42. **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom) said that an effective, transparent and accessible justice system was essential to consolidating the rule of law and protecting human rights, the mainstay of a thriving economy and one of the ways of attracting foreign direct investment. She would appreciate it if the representative of Burundi and institutional donors could provide more details of the work being done in that area, in particular on reinforcing capacity, planning and management. It was also important to have the greatest possible political pluralism in society so as to ensure the involvement of the broadest legitimate cross-section of Government, opposition, civil society and the media. That, too, was essential for fostering stability in the country.

43. On possible follow-up, her delegation would appreciate it if the Chairperson could quickly develop a workplan for the Government, the United Nations and the wider international community. She wondered whether the representative of Burundi would find that useful. Her delegation would also find it very helpful to have an assessment of the potential threats to stability — preferably ranked according to whether they required short-, medium- or long-term assistance — so that the Commission could prioritize interventions and decide how best to mitigate those threats. It would be very helpful if all the comments made at the current meeting concerning the threats facing Burundi could be put in one document, which could be prepared jointly by the Government of Burundi and the United Nations country team.

44. Lastly, while welcoming the way in which the meeting was being conducted, with its focus on dialogue and interaction, she wondered whether it would be possible for members to receive documentation further in advance, so as to be able to make a more substantial contribution.

45. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

46. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Filip (Inter-Parliamentary Union) took a place at the Committee table.*

47. **Ms. Filip** (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) recalled that, at the first country-specific meeting on Burundi, the Inter-Parliamentary Union had proposed a number of concrete measures that should be undertaken — with international and, in particular, Peacebuilding Commission support — in order to consolidate the institution of parliament as a key pillar of good governance, dialogue and reconciliation in the country. A few of those proposed measures, including one initiative to help forge a culture of dialogue and cooperation among the various political factions within Parliament, were already being implemented; others, such as a programme to train newly elected women legislators and strengthen women's political participation, would become operational soon, with financial support from the United Nations Democracy Fund; and others still, dealing with issues critical to building sustainable peace, were still awaiting funding from the United Nations and, in particular, the Peacebuilding Commission.

48. IPU representatives had also met with the speakers of the two chambers of Parliament to explain to them the role and mandate of the Commission and to encourage them to interact directly with both the Government and the Commission, in order to ensure that the Parliament received adequate attention and figured high among the Commission's priorities. Furthermore, during a recent IPU mission to Bujumbura, meetings had been held with various top political leaders, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representatives in the field. IPU had also facilitated the first direct meeting of parliamentary leaders of Burundi with the Chairperson, in his capacity as the Peacebuilding Commission Vice-Chairperson responsible for Burundi. IPU looked forward to working together with the Commission with a view to ensuring that the expectations of the people of Burundi were met and ensuring that Parliament could become a strong and effective legislative body capable of playing its constitutional role as a key forum for reconciliation, dialogue and conflict resolution.

49. **Mr. Faaborg-Andersen** (Denmark) welcomed the representative of Burundi's statement, in particular his reference to the Government's initiative to establish a coordination forum with the support of the United Nations and the involvement of key donors at the local level. It was important to look at how various peacebuilding efforts interfaced with strategic frameworks already in place in the country, to ensure full alignment between initiatives. The Commission needed to identify which interventions were the main priority at the moment. A number of national strategies were already in place and what was needed was a distinct peacebuilding strategy for Burundi. Such a strategy should be fully owned by the Burundian Government and should ideally benefit from input at the country level. Once it had been prepared, the proposed strategy could then be examined and further enriched by the Commission. The strategy should not simply be a compilation of the various projects requiring funding, but also mention policies and initiatives that were to be undertaken by the Government in key areas.

50. His delegation agreed with the main priorities outlined by the representative of Burundi: corruption, security sector reform, rule of law and settlement of land disputes. The Commission now needed to develop a plan on how to address the key challenges in those areas, including the funding requirements of each initiative. He was reluctant to make budgetary support an element of peacebuilding efforts, even though he recognized that the two were linked. The World Bank had already allocated budgetary support worth $60 million for the coming year. The areas being considered by the Commission were more easily identifiable than budgetary support, which was a fairly broad category of assistance. It was necessary, perhaps, to spell out exactly how budgetary support was related to the threats currently faced by the country. There was clearly a strong need for peacebuilding efforts in Burundi. While developments such as the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and PALIPEHUTU-FNL were cause for optimism, internal issues such as ongoing human rights abuses and a poorly functioning justice system were jeopardizing long-term stability. In that regard, his delegation would be interested to hear the views of the representative of Burundi regarding the internal political situation, including the arrest and delayed trial of the alleged coup plotters.

51. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) said that the major concerns highlighted by the representative of Burundi needed to be shared by the Commission and the

international community as a whole. Without judicial reform, it would not be possible to establish, let alone consolidate, the rule of law or restore the trust of citizens in the system of justice. The Commission should also agree with the representative on the need to contribute financially to security sector reform. That aspect sometimes escaped the attention of donors and development partners. In many capitals, the very principle of contributing to a country's security sector reform was not always well regarded, because it was considered to be a question of national sovereignty for which the country concerned should assume full responsibility. However, peace could not be decreed or enacted. Rather, it was a holistic process, comprising many difficult steps. If the Commission really wanted to help Burundi make a policy of inclusion the necessary platform for national reconciliation, security sector reform was essential.

52. He disagreed with the representative of Denmark on the issue of budgetary support. Reducing the budget deficit and providing budgetary support to a Government in need did contribute to peace, consolidate social justice and ensure the existence of a democracy based on social peace. When civil servants were not paid, there was social unrest, which in turn jeopardized the peace process. In that regard, the World Bank contribution, while welcome, was not enough, as it did not cover all the needs identified by the representative of Burundi.

53. He commended the Chairperson on his visit to Burundi. It was essential for the Commission to see first-hand what was happening in the country and establish contacts with the population, so as to ensure that its message of peace and national reconciliation was heard and understood and that Burundians knew they were not alone.

54. Peace was not a linear process; there were advances and setbacks. Indeed, sometimes it was necessary to take a step back in order to better see what needed to be done. Regarding the recent arrest of several journalists, for example, the Government had clearly stated its intolerance of abuses and its commitment to due process. There were, of course, shortcomings. While the international community must be demanding, it must also be patient and recognize the progress Burundi had made so far.

55. He agreed with the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the need to emphasize principles while taking a constructive approach. It was important to try to understand the complexity of the situation in Burundi and help the Burundian people so that they did not become discouraged. He also agreed with the representative of Burundi that corruption must be tackled. The laws recently adopted in that regard would ensure that the Government took greater responsibility for combating corruption, unlawful enrichment and financial waste. The Commission should support the efforts being made by the Government of Burundi. The decision by Norway to open a diplomatic representation in Burundi should be an inspiration to all States.

56. Lastly, population density was a serious problem that needed to be addressed. The Commission should help Burundi address the key issue of land reform and secure funds so that it could justly compensate and assist those people whose land had been occupied by others. However, the issue should be resolved according to the law. By helping Burundi in that regard, the Commission would also be helping consolidate peace in the country.

57. **Mr. Nshimirimana** (Burundi), speaking as the representative of civil society, said that, as a contribution to the process of identifying peacebuilding priorities in Burundi, Burundian civil society organizations had organized a consultation workshop in November 2006. The workshop had been attended by 83 people representing 70 organizations (including five international NGOs) and coming from across the country. The organizations concerned worked in such areas as religion, human rights, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, development, the environment, HIV/AIDS, youth, women and trade unions. Priority objectives, expected results and actions relating to the three priorities identified at the October meeting had been proposed. The summary document had been officially submitted to the Government and a copy sent to ONUB.

58. In order to promote good governance, they proposed, inter alia, strengthening the capacity of State institutions and civil society organizations; establishing permanent forums for dialogue and consultation among State and non-State actors at all levels; and promoting transparency in governance and combating corruption and embezzlement.

59. In order to strengthen the rule of law and the security sector, they proposed ensuring the

independence of the judiciary, by establishing a Judicial Service Commission elected entirely by judges, making the judiciary autonomous and providing it with the resources it needed to do its work; ensuring respect for human rights through the establishment of a national agency to monitor human rights violations, education for peace programmes, and human rights training for elected officials, civil society organizations, and defence and security forces; establishing a truth and reconciliation commission and an international criminal tribunal for Burundi; strengthening and harmonizing the capacity of the defence and security forces; implementing the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and PALIPEHUTU-FNL; and disarming civilians.

60. In order to promote community recovery, they proposed the socio-economic reintegration and psychological rehabilitation of returnees, displaced persons, ex-combatants and former political prisoners, through community centres, community-level conflict management mechanisms, activities to promote peaceful coexistence among communities and a massive injection of funds in rural areas and the private sector in the form of loans to quick-impact microprojects; and responding to the challenges facing women and children, in particular through implementation of the national gender policy, which had been adopted but never implemented.

61. Civil society organizations were committed to working with the Government and United Nations agencies on those proposed actions, in particular by sharing their expertise, preparing periodic follow-up reports and facilitating the population's involvement in implementation.

62. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that all issues must be brought to light so that the Commission could be properly apprised of the situation on the ground. Issues needing to be addressed included risk reduction and sustainable economic recovery, immediate and visible peace dividends, youth unemployment and, in particular, budgetary support. His delegation agreed with the United Kingdom representative that it would be useful to draw up workplans, as they would help to inform the Chairperson's summary.

63. **Mr. Deruffe** (France) wondered how the Commission could assist the Government of Burundi in implementing the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement with PALIPEHUTU-FNL. He also wished to know what kind of external support the Government required and whether that support could be channelled through the Commission. Finally, he would welcome further information on the land entitlement issue and the development of specific measures to combat impunity.

64. **Mr. Hamburger** (Netherlands) said that the Commission seemed to be jumping from priorities to activities without a precise plan. While Burundi required support in many areas, the Commission's main task was to help the Government develop a specific peacebuilding strategy.

65. His delegation agreed with the representative of Guinea-Bissau that budgetary support was required to help the Government function; however, it was also important that the Government sector should be streamlined. Institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP had a major role to play in that regard.

66. Full political inclusiveness was a key factor in the peace consolidation process and it was vital that civil society and NGOs should be involved both at the country level and in the meetings of the Commission. The Government of Burundi should also involve the donors more at the local level. Finally, it would be appreciated if the meeting documentation could be made available in a timely manner. An annotated agenda and workplan would also help to facilitate the Commission's discussions.

67. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of the European Community had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

68. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Lintonen (European Community) took a place at the Committee table.*

69. **Ms. Lintonen** (European Community) drew attention to the letter from the European Union to the President of the Commission on the common position of the European Union regarding the Peacebuilding Commission.

70. The European Union commended the Government's efforts to resolve the conflict with the remaining rebel groups and encouraged it to strengthen the democratic process through dialogue with the various political parties, in cooperation with civil society. Justice, reconciliation, good governance, security and respect for human rights were crucial for sustainable peace. The European Union was pleased

that the Government had recently developed anti-corruption initiatives and welcomed its efforts to set up an independent judiciary.

71. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of the European Community had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

72. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Valenzuela (European Community) took a place at the Committee table.*

73. **Mr. Valenzuela** (European Community) wished to know whether the Government planned to finance the projects solely through the Peacebuilding Fund or whether it planned to make use of funds from other sources.

74. It was important to follow up the previous meeting by identifying the real priorities. Clearly, the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and the signing of a peace agreement were essential to the peace consolidation process. Proposals should be listed in order of priority and should include a clear explanation of the risks involved at each level. The European Community agreed with the representatives of France and Belgium that the various projects should be linked in some way and that they should be part of a wider strategy. There must also be a timeline and benchmarks to assess progress.

75. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of Canada had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

76. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Hulan (Canada) took a place at the Committee table.*

77. **Ms. Hulan** (Canada) said that Canada regretted the ongoing fragility of the political partnerships in Burundi, as it undermined progress on peacebuilding and governance in particular. Pluralism was as essential to the country's political well-being as it was to building international confidences as a precursor to foreign direct investment.

78. She agreed with the priority areas identified in the mapping document but would appreciate receiving a joint assessment, led by Burundi, of critical interventions that would have multiple dividends and, in particular, gird the peace process through the transition period.

79. Regarding the need for budgetary support and the inability to pay salaries, a more detailed breakdown of acute needs would enable the Commission to hold a more targeted discussion. Finally, she advised the Commission that Canada would provide $20 million to the Peacebuilding Fund over the next 18 months.

80. **Ms. Mladineo** (Croatia) said that the main priorities were to reform the security sector, establish the rule of law and strengthen the judiciary. She welcomed the mapping document and hoped that it would lead to some sort of road map or workplan that included benchmarks for both Burundi and the international community. Despite recent discussions on the matter, education and the empowerment of women had not been included as priority areas.

81. **Mr. Oshima** (Japan) said that Japan had recently held several high-level meetings with the Burundian Government, during which it had reiterated the importance of establishing a solid mechanism for dialogue. Given that combatants and rebels in the Great Lakes region often crossed borders, Japan recommended a regional approach to peacebuilding. In that regard, the Commission should make use of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission, the existing regional framework, to try to eliminate the seeds of hatred through a common understanding of the region's history and the causes of conflict. Finally, it was essential to professionalize the police and national defence forces and to make every effort to remove from circulation the small arms that were currently widely available in the country. He wanted to know what measures the Government was taking to that end and what kind of assistance was required of the international community.

82. His Government had supported several initiatives, none of which had been mentioned in the mapping document. A list of contributions would be submitted to the Peacebuilding Support Office in the hope that they would be duly reflected in the future.

83. **Mr. Toledo** (Chile) said that his delegation would appreciate receiving further information regarding social development measures. Clearly, social development was an ongoing project but it would be useful if the Government could provide a list of priorities. His delegation would also like to receive more information on the land entitlement issue and budgetary support.

84. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of Rwanda had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

85. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) took a place at the Committee table.*

86. **Mr. Nsengimana** (Rwanda) said that it was particularly important to build confidence among all the actors on the ground. Once mutual confidence had been established, it would be possible to assess progress and initiate an actual process rather than a series of separate actions. It was also crucial that the Government should receive budgetary support in order to implement its programmes. The Commission needed to take prompt action, as the situation on the ground could deteriorate at any time.

87. **Mr. Melrose** (United States of America) said that his delegation agreed with the representatives of Denmark, France and the United Kingdom that the Commission should focus on identifying gaps and developing a peacebuilding strategy. It also agreed with the position held by several representatives that the Commission should be cautious with regard to budgetary support as a routine Fund activity, given that such support was the focus of other donor and international financial institution activity.

88. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador), Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, said that it was important to establish a systematic and inclusive political dialogue in order to maintain confidence in the peace process. One way to promote a culture of dialogue would be to convert the National Commission into a standing body. It was also necessary to train and equip the security forces and to reform the judicial system; however, that could not be accomplished without medium and long-term assistance. Specific agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) could contribute not only by providing financial assistance but also by promoting education for peace. Finally, national reconciliation should not be confined to specific projects but should be made part of the ongoing work of the National Commission.

89. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that meetings should be postponed if the necessary documentation was not available in all the official languages. His delegation regretted that the Commission had not given the Government of Burundi a more precise indication of what was required with respect to "identifying the gaps". As a result, the mapping document contained a list of initiatives currently under way, but did not give any indication of what might be required in the future. Clearly, the Commission could not make any decisions as to which funding mechanism should be used if it did not know what needed to be achieved and what funds were required.

90. His delegation also deeply regretted that the secretariat had taken it upon itself to visit Burundi without the authorization of the Commission. It was the responsibility of the Commission, not the secretariat, to advise Governments of what type of information was required. The Peacebuilding Commission needed to go beyond making statements and requesting donations. It was time to get to the crux of the matter and decide exactly what it wished to achieve.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.